



Talon_swat

Armed robots — similar to the ones [now on patrol in Iraq](#) — are being marketed to domestic police forces, according to the machines' manufacturer and law enforcement officers. None of the gun-toting 'bots appear to have been deployed domestically, yet. Both cops and company officials say it's only a matter of time, however.

"Other than some R&D with the shotgun mount, we haven't used it operationally," Massachusetts State Police Trooper Mike Rogowski tells [DANGER ROOM](#). "But they're on the way. They're coming,"

Foster-Miller, maker of the armed SWORDS robot for military use, is also actively promoting a similar model to domestic, civilian police

forces. The [Talon SWAT/MP](#) is a "robot specifically equipped for scenarios frequently encountered by police SWAT [special weapon and tactics] units and MPs [military police]," a company fact sheet announces. It "can be configured with the following equipment:

- *Multi-shot TASER electronic control device with laser-dot aiming.*
- *Loudspeaker and audio receiver for negotiations.*
- *Night vision and thermal cameras.*
- *Choice of weapons for lethal or less-than-lethal responses*
 - *40 mm grenade launcher – 2 rounds*
 - *12-gauge shotgun – 5 rounds*
 - *FN303 less-lethal launcher – 15 rounds.*

In addition to the Massachusetts State Police, SWAT teams in Houston, San Francisco, and Lubbock, TX all have the robots, according to Foster-Miller spokesperson Cynthia Black. None of the team have armed the machines, so far. But Trooper Rogowski, for one, is extremely interested — especially in equipping the robot with a less-lethal weapon, like a three-shot Taser stun gun. "That would be phenomenal," he says.

However, Trooper Rogowski adds, "Massachusetts is a pretty liberal state. To get management to sign off on an armed weapons platform — that'll be pretty interesting, to see how that goes."

(Foster-Miller competitor iRobot recently teamed up with Taser International to build a stun gun-packing 'bot of their own.)

Like the SWORDS, the Talon SWAT/MP is based on Foster-Miller's line of bomb-disposal robots which have seen [years' worth of action in Iraq](#). Rogowski says handling ordnance is his robot's main mission, too. But the machine has also been deployed in SWAT-type situations — even before it gets armed.

Last fall, Rogowski remembers, a person in the town of Wilbraham, Massachusetts had barricaded himself into his house. But the overwhelming odor of propane fumes made police reluctant to send humans in. The robot went instead — and discovered propane tanks, as well as the man. "He had shot himself in the master bedroom," Rogowski recalls.

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